

Perseverance: The Book in the Pillow
Adapted from *Hero Tales, Volume I*, by Dave and Neta Jackson

Adoniram Judson and his wife were America's first foreign missionaries, serving in the country of Burma. Despite imprisonment and the loss of his family, Judson succeeded in translating the entire Bible into the Burmese language.

"Adoniram!" my wife called to me. "Koo-chill says our supper is ready."

Wearily, I put away the manuscript I had been working on. My wife and I had been in Burma for thirteen years. The language is hard and translating the Bible is slow work. Burma and England are at war, so we work quietly in our bamboo home on stilts. It is still too dangerous to do mission work in public.

Ann and I and our two Burmese foster daughters started to eat Koo-chill's tasty fish soup. Suddenly the door burst open and several men rushed inside. "Mr. Judson? You are under arrest!" the city magistrate told me. "Tie him up!"

"What is the charge?" I asked them. They roughly tied my arms behind my back.

"The English are paying you. You are spies!" they accused.

"No, no!" my wife Ann cried. Our frightened girls hid behind Koo-chill the cook. "Our English friends simply cashed our mission checks from America."

But in spite of my wife's pleas, I was dragged away and thrown into the dreaded Death Prison, along with several English prisoners also thought to be spies.

When my wife finally got permission to visit me two days later, it was hard to be brave. At night, the feet of the prisoners, including mine, were tied to a pole that was lifted into the air so that only our shoulders touched the ground.

"Where is my manuscript?" I asked her.

"I buried it beneath the house," my wife whispered back.

"That is the first place they will look!"

Ann looked at me thoughtfully. "Don't worry. I have a plan."

The next time my wife came to see me, she brought a pillow—a hard, lumpy pillow that no other prisoner would want to steal. We shared a secret smile.

For eleven months, she visited me in the Death Prison as often as she could. She brought baby Maria, born while I was in prison, to see me. But one day when she arrived at the prison, it was empty! No one knew where we prisoners had been taken.

As I was forced to march in chains to a new prison, I felt sick at heart. The guards had refused to let me take the precious pillow. They had thrown it into the garbage. Thirteen years of work translating the Bible—in the trash!

Finally, the king released me to help translate a peace treaty between England and Burma. Then I was allowed to go back to my family. I was happy to be home with my wife and child—but I was discouraged.

"Everything is lost. We will have to start all over again."

Ann just smiled at me. Gently, she placed a hard, lumpy pillow in my hands. My mouth fell open. The manuscript was safe inside! A Burmese Christian had discovered the pillow on the garbage heap and brought it safely home.

Now the Burmese people could have the Word of God in their own language.

Perseverance is sticking to the task God has given you, even when it means suffering.

